

Member Profile

Ilka Bene, CPHR

What is your favourite quote?

This one is attributed to Helen Keller by many, but scholars say it's actually from Edward Everett Hale. Because I was a young girl when inspired by Helen, I'm giving her credit for bringing it into my life:

"I am only one but, still, I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

I like this because it reminds each of us that we can make a difference and that we are, in fact, obligated to try.

Why did you choose a career in HR?

I was merrily headed to a career in the physical sciences when I took on a volunteer leadership role that had me achieving great things by working with people. Suddenly I realized that this is where my passion was drawing me so I did an extra 2 years at University while I was working in the sciences. By happy circumstance, the Alberta government was looking for an HR nerdling, with equal measures of HR knowledge and analytical abilities, and I was off!

If you were not an HR professional, what path might you have chosen?

I would love to explore the world of Marketing. I appreciate the creativity and fun balanced with the serious business of analytics. And it's all about human behaviour and motivation, after all, which means it's an occupational sibling to HR, isn't it?



"In many organizations, HR is often kind of lonely. You don't always have professional peers in-house to learn from. My membership gives me access to a generous and skilled group of colleagues. Our professional organization also puts together amazing learning opportunities locally and throughout BC/Yukon that are truly world-class. I do believe that our association is elevating our profession and helping connect HR/people to business purpose." — Member since 2001

What milestone or challenge has defined the past year for you?

Well, in 2017 I was honoured by CPHR as HR Professional of the Year – that was a defining and pinnacle moment in my career. As an HR pro it's odd to be 'out in front'; we're typically recognizing others.

The true emotional, professional and personal milestone for me was when I found out that I had been nominated. When I realized that there was a small number of people who cared deeply about me, my work, and the impact we were having. That was a moment of wonder and humility that I can still recreate in my heart just thinking about it.